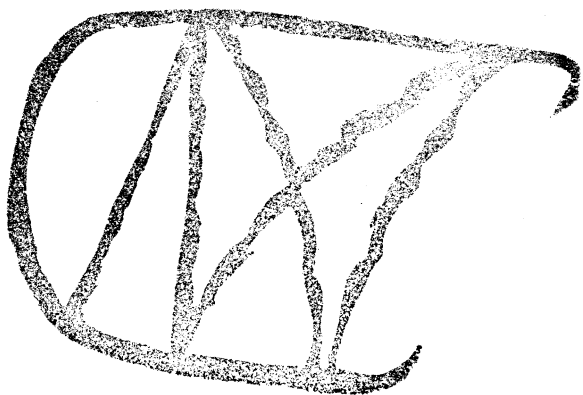


This pamphlet collects just a few of the surviving literary fragments and insurrectionary ephemera produced by the Russian individualist anarchists A.L. and V.L. Gordin, before and during the Russian Revolution. In 1917, the Gordin brothers founded a society of Anarchist-Communists which they called the Union of the Oppressed Five, the "Oppressed Five" referred to those categories of humanity which endured the greatest hardships under the yoke of Western civilization: "worker-vagabond," national minority, woman, youth, and individual personality. The organizationalists and dry rationalists of the Russian anarchist movement considered the Gordin's wild-eyed philosophers run amuck, annihilators of all accepted verities and traditions who were satanically bent upon the destruction of all institutionalized discipline and (party) authority. In the context of the Russian Revolution, the Gordin Brothers fashioned Molotov cocktails out of these ideas and bolstered their impactive power with their own colorful and explosive language.

ENEMY COMBATANT PUBLICATIONS



RED BANK, NEW JERSEY

EXTINGUISH THE OLD



THE OPPRESSED WRITINGS OF
A.L. AND V.L. GORDIN

Here are a few seminal books on Russian individualist anarchism that are crying out to be translated:

Novoe napravlenie v anarkhizme: assotsiatsionnyi anarkhizm
by Lev Chernyi

O klassakh
by Lev Chernyi

Anarkhizm
by Aleksei Borovoi

EXTINGUISH THE OLD
THE OPPRESSED WRITINGS OF
A.L. AND V.L. GORDIN

Nothing Forgotten and Nothing Learned

The unwillingness of the common people to rule over others and their desire, on the contrary, to abolish authority; their refusal to obey or to grovel; their instinctive tendency towards anarchy, to secure a true dictatorship of the proletariat rather than a fictitious one in the form of Executive Committees or Soviets, a dictatorship, that is, of the people themselves, the power of each person over himself—that is the true dictatorship of the Individual. I am my own minister, my own lawmaker, my own dictator, my own authority. This is a real popular dictatorship, a natural, normal, physiological dictatorship. It is the most natural thing for an individual to possess physiological power, to exercise a physiological dictatorship over the parts of his body, over his arms and legs, to dictate his own behavior through the power of free action, the power to do what he feels is necessary. This is the physiological, the only proper, natural and just dictatorship of free activity. This is the ideal of Anarchy.

I am a person—and there is no authority higher than my “I”!

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Such is the poetry of our melancholy! We are uninhibited! Not for us the wailing sentimentality of the humanists. Rather we shall create the triumphant intellectual brotherhood of peoples, forged with the iron logic of contradictions, of Hate and Love. With bared teeth we shall protect our free union, from Africa to the two poles, against any sentimental level of friendship. Everything is ours! Outside us is only death! Raising the black flag of rebellion, we summon all living men who have not been dehumanized, who have not been benumbed by the poisonous breath of Civilization! All to the streets! Forward! Destroy! Kill! Only death admits no return! Extinguish the old! Thunder, lightning, the elements - all are ours! Forward!

Long live the international intellectual revolution!

An open road for the Anarcho-Futurists, Anarcho-Hyperboreans, and Neo-Nihilists!

Death to World Civilization!

Anarcho-Futurist Manifesto

Ah-ah-ah, ha-ha, ho-ho!

Fly into the streets! All who are still fresh and young and not dehumanized - to the streets! The pot-bellied mortar of laughter stands in a square drunk with joy. Laughter and Love, copulating with Melancholy and Hate, pressed together in the mighty, convulsive passion of bestial lust. Long live the psychology of contrasts! Intoxicated, burning spirits have raised the flaming banner of intellectual revolution. Death to the creatures of routine, the philistines, the sufferers from gout! Smash with a deafening noise the cup of vengeful storms! Tear down the churches and their allies the museums! Blast to smithereens the fragile idols of Civilization! Hey, you decadent architects of sarcophagi of thought, you watchmen of the universal cemetery of books - stand aside! We have come to remove you! The old must be buried, the dusty archives burned by the Vulcan's torch of creative genius. Past the flaky ashes of world-wide devastation, past the charred canvases of bulky paintings, past the burned fat, pot-bellied volumes of classics we march, we Anarcho-Futurists! Above the vast expanse of devastation covering our land the banner of anarchy will be proudly unfurled. Writing has no value! There is no market for literature! There are no prisons, no limits for subjective creativity! Everything is permitted! Everything is unrestricted! The Children of Nature receive in joyous ecstasy the chivalrous golden kiss of the Sun and the lascivious, naked, fat belly of the Earth. The Children of Nature springing from the black soil kindle the passions of naked, lustful, bodies. They press them all in one spawning, pregnant cup! The skin is inflamed by hot, insatiable, gnawing caresses. Teeth sink with hatred into warm succulent lovers' flesh! Wide, staring eyes follow the pregnant, burning dance of lust! Everything is strange, uninhibited, elemental. Convulsions - flesh - life - death - everything! Everything! Such is the poetry of our love! Powerful, immortal, and terrible are we in our love! The north wind rages in the heads of the Children of Nature. Something frightful has appeared - some vampire of melancholy! Perdition - the world is dying! Catch it! No, wait! Frenzied, penetrating cries pierce the air. Wait! Melancholy! Black yawning ulcers of agony cover the pale, terror-stricken face of heaven. The earth trembles with fear beneath the mighty wrathful blows of its Children! Oh, you cursed, loathsome things! They tear at the fat, tender flesh and bury the withered, starving melancholy in the flowing blood and fresh wounds of its body. The world is dying! Ah! Ah! Ah! cry millions of tocsins. Ah! Ah! Ah! roar the giant cannon of alarm. Destruction! Chaos! Melancholy! The world is dying!

Introduction

"There are works that come down to us with question-marks blazing like sawed-off shotguns, scattering here and there and everywhere sparks that illuminate our own restless search for answers. Sade's 120 Days, Fourier's New Amorous World, Lautremont's Poesies, Randolph Bourne's essay on The State, Jacque Vache's War letters, Duchamp's Green Box, the Samuel Greenberg manuscripts: These are only a few of the extraordinary fragments that have, for many of us, exerted a fascination greater than that of all but a very few "finished" works."

—Franklin Rosemont

This pamphlet collects a few of the surviving literary fragments and insurrectionary ephemera produced by the Russian individualist anarchists A.L. and V.L. Gordin, before and during the Russian Revolution. Abba Gordin (1887-1964) and his brother Vladimir Zev-Volf Gordin were born in Michalishok, Poland, in the Vilna region. They both studied in a Jewish primary school and later spent two years in yeshiva, as well as engaging in self-study of Hebrew, Russian, English, German, Yiddish and other languages (which served them well in their later publishing endeavors). We're not sure how the brothers first became radicalized, but they began writing for the Russian anarchist press in 1908 and didn't so much compose anarchist tracts, as "bake" them, so prolific was their literary output.

Both in style and temperament, the Gordins were direct descendants of Bidbei and Rostovtsev, and exponents of the passionate and erratic variety of Russian anarchism founded by Bakunin. The verbose but fascinating essays which they produced in great quantity were marked by a degree of

anti-intellectualism unmatched even in the diatribes of their forebears. Take, for example, the following proclamation printed in enormous letters across the front page of the paper *Burevestnik* early in 1918:

UNEDUCATED ONES! DESTROY THAT LOATHSOME CULTURE WHICH DIVIDES MEN INTO "IGNORANT" AND "LEARNED." THEY ARE KEEPING YOU IN THE DARK. THEY HAVE PUT OUT YOUR EYES. IN THIS DARKNESS, IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT OF CULTURE, THEY HAVE ROBBED YOU.

Hardly a day passed without a similar inflammatory tirade by the Gordin brothers. Their rejection of contemporary European culture was as sweeping as their output was inexhaustible. The neologisms that adorned their articles and pamphlets were samples of the new language they planned to construct to suit the post-bourgeois world of the future. Noisy in appearance, like a typographical alarm bell, the Gordins extravagantly self-assured proclamations had an endearing madness about them: immediate and urgent, attention-grabbing, always in overdose and overdrive. The compulsive character of their work lends some credence to the caustic observation of a revisionist Marxist scholar that the Gordins were suffering from an extreme case of "graphomania." Still and all, their poems and manifestoes make absorbing reading and, for all their prolixity, abound with flashes of insight and an indefatigable lust for life.

The organizationalists and dry rationalists of the Russian anarchist movement considered the Gordins' wild-eyed philosophers run amuck, annihilators of all accepted verities and traditions who were satanically bent upon the destruction of all institutionalized discipline and (party) authority. They shot sharp arrows into the camps of both the socialists *and* the anarchists and prided themselves (like Nietzsche) on being the breakers of old images and great destroyers of petrified "eternal truths". A.L. and V.L. Gordin were opposed to every form of authority that might limit their personal freedom; for them, society was nothing more than a collection of autonomous individuals, and they were intensely suspicious of all types of organization, even those put forth by their fellow anarchists. Deeply influenced by Max Stirner and Benjamin Tucker, the German and American theorists of individualist anarchism, the Gordins demanded the total liberation of the human personality from the fetters of organized society. In their view, even the voluntary communities of Bakunin and Kropotkin might restrict the freedom of the individual. From Nietzsche, moreover, the Gordins inherited a desire for a complete overthrow of all middle-class values—political, moral and cultural. But it was the Gordins engagement with the psychological dimensions of Stirner's thought that really galvanized their pens—and informed their own perspectives on class struggle and conscious *egoism*.

English horse-breeding). The rule of heaven and the rule of nature—angels, spirits, devils, molecules, atoms, ether, the laws of God/Heaven and the laws of Nature, forces, the influence of one body on another—all this is invented, formed, created by society (sociomorphic).

God is an image of the absolute Asian monarch. The laws of heaven, the laws of the stars, the astrology of Assyria and Babylonia—these are the laws of emperors. The laws of Nature are the laws of the State; natural force is coercion. The forces of Nature resemble the European constitutional monarchs and constitutional bureaucracy, and sometimes Nature even resembles the president of a democratic republic!

Pan-anarchism teaches that the universe is neither man nor society. It has neither beginning nor end, neither origin (cosmogony) nor cause, neither laws nor knout-like forces. The universe and every natural phenomenon is always "itself"—individualist anarchist and anarchist communist, so to speak. The universe and all its phenomena are spontaneous. In the universe and in every phenomenon there is nothing external, no coercive order, but rather *anarchy*, i.e. internal (immanent) order, independent and spontaneous. There is no natural force, but only actions and affinities.

For pan-anarchism the basic error of religion and science is that the first is the fruit of fantasy and the second the fruit of the intellect (mental configurations or abstractions). Thus pan-anarchism holds only feelings, or rather muscles and technics, to be genuine. Pan-anarchism regards only technics as the culture of the people, the toilers, the oppressed, technics in the broad meaning of the term, embracing all crafts, all practical arts, and so on, which it calls pan-technics.

With regard to the study of society, pan-anarchism rejects all sociological laws or social evolution and development, replacing those with *socio-technics*, the building of societies with the explicit right of social experimentation, improvisation and invention. Pan-anarchism, clothed in technicalism, means not only total and universal anarchy but also anarchy *now*. Instead of Social-Democratic evolution and reform, it advances the slogan of Social Revolution, upholding the golden anarchist rule: Straight on towards our goal!

And so—

Long live Pan-Anarchy!

International and an International of Individual Personalities, as well as the eventual formation of one joint International of the Oppressed founded on the principle of the *equality* of all the oppressed.

Pan-anarchism stands for pan-destruction, for the elimination of all five types of oppression in existing society. Thus the aim of pan-anarchism is not the liberation of one group of the oppressed through the oppression of the rest, as for example in the inauguration of a dictatorship of the proletariat, but the liberation of all the oppressed, of all humanity, of all downtrodden elements. Pan-anarchism, moreover, is the liberation of humanity from the slavery of capitalism and the state, the slavery of formal education and of household drudgery, and the slavery of nationalism.

More simply, pan-anarchism insists that there be neither rich nor poor, neither rulers nor subjects, neither enslaving teachers nor enslaved students, neither male masters nor female slaves. For pan-anarchism each of these demands is of equal importance. Any superiority of one oppressed element over another, whether through leadership or domination, pan-anarchism brands an exploitation of human beings in favor of a particular class or group.

But pan-anarchism does not only mean emancipation from the five forms of oppression. It also means the emancipation of oppressed humanity from two deceptions: the deception of religion and the deception of science, which are in essence merely two varieties of the same deception, the deception of the oppressed by the oppressors. Pan-anarchism declares that religion and science were invented as a means of distracting attention from oppression and from the real tangible world, substituting for it an intangible world, either supernatural (religion) or abstract (science). Pan-anarchism views science as a reformed religion and nature as a reformed God. Science is the religion of the *bourgeoisie*, just as religion was the science of the nobility and slave-holders.

Pan-anarchism proclaims universal statelessness, cosmic anarchy, anarchy everywhere! All forms of religion and science are not only devices of bourgeois oppression, nets and snares, lures and bait for the oppressed; they are also fraudulent and barbarous, narrow and stupid, naïve and comical, muddled and contradictory. Science is one of the stupidities of the European savage, just as religion is a stupidity of the Asiatic savage. Both form a single tissue of confusions and contradictions: God and no God, cause and no cause; God the real builder and God building from “nothing”, meaning that he himself is the absolute “nothing”, a non-God; cause traced back to the first cause, becoming self-cause or no cause.

God and Nature are made in man’s image, anthropomorphic. The Eskimo envisages them from his hunting in the form of a white bear (the world originated from the white bear); the Hebrews from their trades (God the carpenter and tailor). Newton, Kant and Laplace envisage Nature according to European mechanics, Darwin and Spencer according to English horse-breeding (natural selection followed the pattern of artificial selection in

Stirner’s *The Ego and Its Own* singled out the proletariat — the “unstable, restless, changeable” individuals who owe nothing to the state or capitalism — as the one segment of society capable of solidarity with those “intellectual vagabonds” who approached the condition of anarchistic egoism. Liberation for the proletariat did not lie in their consciousness of themselves as a class, as Marx claimed. It would only come if the workers embraced the egotistic attitude of the “vagabond” and shook off the social and moral conventions that yoked them to an exploitive order. Once the struggle for a new, stateless way of life was underway, the sheer vastness of the working class ensured the bourgeoisie’s defeat. “If labor becomes free,” Stirner concluded, “the state is lost”. In the context of the Russian Revolution, the Gordin Brothers fashioned Molotov cocktails out of these ideas and bolstered their impactive power with their own colorful and explosive language.

Anti-Intellectualism

In addition to the almost unquantifiable amount of egoist-influenced pamphlets and broadsheets they released, the Gordins also edited (in Russian) *Beznachalie* (a periodical published briefly in 1917); *Anarkhie* (Anarchy), a daily newspaper published by the Moscow federation of anarchists (Moscow, 1918); and *Ob individualizme* (On individualism), a monthly journal (Moscow, 1922).

Among the full-length **books** Abba Gordin wrote with his brother Zev-Volf during this time-period are the following (with translated titles originally written in Russian): *A System of Material and Relative Natural Moderation* (Vilna, 1909); *Youth Pedagogy* (Moscow, 1918); *Manifest Pananarkhistov* (Pan-anarchist Manifesto), a collection of essays (1918); *Lectures and Speeches* (Moscow, 1919); and in Hebrew, *Gan-teatroni* (Theatrical Garden) and *Misderet hayeladim* (The children’s typesetter) (Vilna, 1910); and in Yiddish, *A megile tsu di yidn in goles* (A scroll for the Jews in Diaspora) (Vilna, 1909); *Undzere khiburim* (Our Treatises) (Vilna, 1912); *Fonetishe ortografye* (Phonetic orthography) (Vilna, 1913); and *Triumfedye* (Triumphant) (Vilna, 1914).

By himself Abba also penned (in Russian): *Why?* (Moscow, 1917); *Anarchism in Spirit* (Moscow, 1919); *Anarchism of Fantasy* (Moscow, 1919); *Freedom de jure and de facto* (Moscow, 1920); *Lower Individualism* (Moscow, 1922); *Egotism, a collection of poems* (Moscow, 1922); *Our Program* (Moscow, 1920); and *How a Peasant Entered the Anarchist Kingdom*. Both of the Gordins were exceptionally gifted with language (Abba spoke seven fluently) and Vladimir even created one of his own, which he called “AO”—a “cosmic” language (strongly connected with numbers) that seems to be invented by the author for international and cosmic communications! He published an entire book on it titled GRAMMATIKA YAZYKA CHELOVECHESHTVA “AO” (“The Grammar of the Language of the Mankind”) through his and Abba’s *Pananarchisty* imprint in 1918.

Anarchists have always set a high value on education, yet have also been strongly suspicious of elaborate philosophical systems and of the intellectuals who spin them. Ever since Bakunin they have rejected the notion that society is governed by rational laws, and have distrusted those members of the intelligentsia who claim to possess superior wisdom or who preach so-called “scientific” dogmas. In their eyes, the historical and sociological theories of Marx, Comte and others are nothing more than artificial contrivances which constrict the natural impulses of humanity. Certain anarchists have gone so far as to argue that intellectuals are a distinct class who have nothing in common with manual laborers but try to lure them with high-flown formulas like conniving mavers in order to catapult themselves into positions of privilege and authority.

The Gordin brothers were leading proponents of this view: passionate apostles of *anti-intellectualism*, their endless flood of pamphlets, proclamations and manifestos attacked intellectualism as an instrument for the subjection and taming of humans; an instrument that suppresses nature-given instincts and turns humans—like the stable-life of domesticated animals—into weak and humble creatures that tremble before their own shadow and are aghast at every boldness and adventure. Metaphysics, a specific branch of excessive intellectualism, was singled out for special rage by the Gordins as a web of superstitions that held the proletariat in its threads like dead flies. Here, again, the Gordins took a page from Stirner, who condemned metaphysics and dismissed the idea of absolute truth as a chimera. Stirner argued that the metaphysical thinking underpinning religion and the notions of absolute truth that structured a wide range of self-alienated theories laid the foundation for the hierarchical division of society into those with knowledge and those without. From here a whole train of economic, social and political inequalities ensued, all of which were antithetical to anarchist egoism. The egoist, Stirner countered, recognized no metaphysical realms or absolute truths separate from experience; “knowledge,” therefore, was ever-changing and varied from individual to individual. These were ideas that the Gordins were to develop with vivid, poetic exuberance during the Russian Revolution.

The Pan-Anarchist Manifesto

In 1917, the Gordin brothers founded a society of Anarchist-Communists which they called the Union of the Oppressed Five, with branches in Petrograd and Moscow. The “Oppressed Five” referred to those categories of humanity which endured the greatest hardships under the yoke of Western civilization: “worker-vagabond,” national minority, woman, youth, and individual personality. Five basic institutions – the state, capitalism, colonialism, the school, and the family – were held responsible for their sufferings. The Gordins worked out a philosophy which they called “Pan-Anarchism” and

Pan-Anarchist Manifesto

Pan-anarchism literally means all-embracing anarchism, “pan” being “all” in Greek. Pan-anarchism is comprehensive and articulate. Aside from the ideal of no government, or anarchism proper, it entails four other ideals, namely: *communism*, with its “everything belongs to everybody”; *pedism*, or the liberation of children and youth from the vice of servile education; *cosmism* (national-cosmopolitanism), the total emancipation of oppressed nationalities; and finally, *gyneantropism*, that is, the emancipation and humanization of women. Taken together, these five ideals fall under the general heading of “pan-anarchism”.

Pan-anarchism implies a synthesis (unification) of all the principal social ideals, actions and aspirations aiming towards an overthrow and reconstruction of *all* society—the economy, the family, the school, international relations and the institutions of government. In the economic sphere pan-anarchism entails the replacement of capitalism by communism, the abolition of private property in land, means of production and consumer goods. In the family it means the end of male domination of the family and of life as a whole, both in fact and in law, the free participation of women in all branches of labor and art and their equal enjoyment of all the benefits of society. In the school it means the replacement of present-day book learning, which indoctrinates our children and youth with religious and scientific prejudices, by a practical education in technical crafts which will be useful in everyday life and which will afford them freedom, self-reliance and the ability to create things by themselves with originality and independence of mind. It also means that the existing territorial system, with its fatherlands and state frontiers and national and private territorial ownership, will be replaced by a national-cosmopolitan order in which there are neither fatherlands nor frontiers but only free unions of free peoples to whom the whole earth belongs in common. “The whole earth to all humanity”—such is the motto of pan-anarchism, as opposed to the territorialism and imperialism of predatory nations which declare that “the whole earth is mine”.

In the realm of governmental organization and its relation to the individual, pan-anarchism stands for the elimination of authority, of the state, and of all forms of compulsion—courts, prisons, militias, etc.—and for the administration of “society” by means of voluntary agreements and consultation.

Pan-anarchism is the ideal of the Union of the Oppressed Five. It summons together all the oppressed to create a world-wide organization, an International of the Oppressed, a World Union of the Oppressed Five for the destruction of the existing order which is founded on five forms of oppression. Pan-anarchism takes the initiative in encouraging the unification of all five oppressed groups in contemporary society into a Worker-Vagabond International, a Youth International, an International of Oppressed Nationalities, a Women’s

everywhere, and now. Destroy the churches, those nests of gentry lies; destroy the university, that nest of bourgeois lies. Drive away the priests, drive away the scientists! Destroy the false gentry and bourgeois heavens. Smash their Peruns¹, gods and idols. There is only one god on earth: it is you, the people, you, the individual.

CREATE ANARCHY!

which prescribed five remedies for the five baneful institutions that tormented the five oppressed elements of modern society. The remedies for the state and capitalism were, simply enough, statelessness and communism; for the remaining three oppressors, however, the antidotes were rather more novel: “cosmism” (the universal elimination of national persecution), “gyneautropism” (the emancipation and humanization of women), and “pedism” (the liberation of the young from “the vise of slave education”).

Anti-intellectualism, of course, lay at the heart of the Pan-Anarchist creed. Borrowing a leaf from Bakunin, the brothers Gordin focused their criticism on book learning, the “diabolical weapon” by which the educated few dominated the unlettered masses. They applied Ockham’s razor to all *a priori* theories and scholastic abstractions, particularly those of religion and science. Religion was “the fruit of fantasy” and science “the fruit of intellect”; both were mythical inventions of the human brain: “The rule of heaven and the rule of nature – angels, spirits, devils, molecules, atoms, ether, the laws of God-Heaven and the laws of Nature, forces, the influence of one body on another – all this is invented, formed, created by society.” The Gordins wished to liberate man’s creative spirit from the shackles of dogma. For them, science – by which they meant all *rational* systems, natural science and social science alike – constituted the new religion of the middle class. The greatest fraud of all was Marx’s theory of dialectical materialism. “Marxism,” they declared, “is the new scientific Christianity, designed to conquer the *bourgeois* world by deceiving the people, the proletariat, just as Christianity deceived the feudal world.” Marx and Engels were “the Magi of scientific socialist black-magic.”

Despite the immediate threat of Marxism, the Gordin brothers were ebulliently optimistic about the future. “The Gods of Europe are dying,” they wrote, victims in a “struggle between two cultures.” Religion and science, outmoded and weak, were retreating before the new and vigorous forces of labor and technology. “The culture of Europe is perishing, religion and science are disappearing from the face of the earth, and only Anarchy and Technics shall rule the earth.” Confident that the traditional book learning used by the ruling classes to dominate the toiling masses was obsolete, the Gordins advised mothers to stop sending their sons into the church or the university. Soon a new type of education would be introduced, emancipating the children of the world from “white-handedness (*belomchestvo*), pitiful intellectualizing, and criminal dehumanization.” Boys and girls would no longer be compelled to study social and natural “laws” out of books, but would receive a “pantechnical” education stressing inventiveness and practical aptitude, technical skill and muscle power, rather than the power of abstract reasoning. The great task ahead, the Gordins declared, was not to theorize but to create, not merely to dream Utopia with our minds but to build it with our hands. And this was the mission of the oppressed five – “The liberation of the oppressed is the task of the oppressed themselves.”

This pamphlet opens up with *The Pan-Anarchist Manifesto* and another inspired rant from this period titled simply *Proclamation*.

1. Perun: god of thunder and chief pagan diety of the eastern Slavs before the Christianization of Russia.

The Anarcho-Futurist Manifesto

The violent rejection of the past which characterizes the theory of pan-anarchism is even more pronounced in the manifesto of the Anarcho-Futurists, a group founded by the Gordin brothers and based in the southern city of Kharkov, a major anarchist center during the Civil War period. Like the Gordin brothers, the Anarcho-Futurists were verbal flame-bearers who felt an insurmountable hatred for the language existing before their time. With Bakunin they were advocates of universal destruction, sharing his belief that “the passion to destroy is a creative passion”, and that a new world would emerge from the ruins of the old. In their contempt for the old and exaltation of the new, their deliberate effort to shock and outrage, and their call for the wholesale destruction of art and culture, they echoed the celebrated Futurist Manifesto published in 1909 by Filippo Marinetti, with its unrestrained imagery and cascading metaphors. Yet their message was simplicity itself: Civilization and Culture, with all their illnesses—to the trash! *The Anarcho-Futurist Manifesto* (authored by the Gordins) is one of those special pieces of writing that affects one like a fiery wine or a revelation—an experience that abides throughout one’s life—and is the third piece you’ll encounter in this (all too brief) collection.

The final entry in this anthology is *Nothing Forgotten and Nothing Learned*. Always the jokers in the card deck of Russian anarchism, this playful rant seems to be the Gordins attempt to subvert the Marxist concept of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” by infusing it with Stirnerian/egoist principles, and thereby, turning it completely on its head.

Tragic Miscalculations

In the early years after the February and October Revolutions, Abba Gordin with his brother, Zev-Volf, were active in the Moscow Federation of Anarchists, which was closer to an “association” in the Stirnerian sense, and which grew by bringing disparate groups together to “unionize” on a foundation of shared criminality. Its headquarters, “The House of Anarchy,” was the old civic Merchants’ Club, “confiscated” and communalized in March, 1917. From there it expanded spontaneously as anarchists organized themselves into affinity groups, joined the Federation, and began contributing to the collective welfare. Autonomous self-governance, voluntary federation, the spread of power horizontally — these were the features of the Federations insurgency. As a result, wherever the Federation held sway, power remained fluid, unbounded by central authority, and ever-creative in its manifestations.

Banditry and counterfeiting were two of the more inventive ways anarchists connected to the Federation attempted to assert autonomy outside

Proclamation

Homeless, shelterless son of the street, lured by the glow of the fireplace, the warmth and comforts of home, soft carpets underfoot, the lulling tones of a piano. All gates are closed to you. All doors are slammed shut. Your bare feet are cut by stones and ice, your ears pierced by the watchdog’s howl and gatekeeper’s shout. Bodies lounge on silken cushions—the wind cuts through your rags. Passions riot beneath warm blankets—but your lips are frozen, your heart is ashes, your hands are ice. You nestle yourself resignedly against a wall in some corner and doze fitfully. Nearby a prostitute walks back and forth. It’s your daughter, selling her youthful flame to old hearts crusted with gold.

You stupid wretch! Right here is a home, here is warmth, here is comfort. Go in and settle down. Let the owners of the houses and palaces roam the streets and feel their own teeth chatter. Let their own daughters sell themselves if they refuse to build a new order on earth. Create Anarchy! Oppressed and smoldering people, ignite the flames of Anarchy. Let your life’s blood, now grown cold, turn to the fire. Burn everything around you. Boldly ignite the flames of Anarchy. CREATE ANARCHY!

Rejected, fallen, despised ones, arise and destroy the society in which there is “higher” and “lower”. Arise and show that you are above us, that we are unworthy of your company, unworthy even of your contempt. Everything that was above you will be beneath you. Create Anarchy! Slaves, open your eyes and see that you are free! The deceivers are putting new chains on you. Fling them to the devil! Obey no one. Humble yourselves before no one. Create your own freedom, your own happiness. CREATE ANARCHY!

Uneducated ones, destroy that loathsome culture which divides men into “ignorant” and “learned”. They are keeping you in the dark. They have put out your eyes. And in this darkness, in this dark night of culture, they have robbed you.

People, the priests and scientists have robbed you, robbed you of your wholesome thoughts, your simplicity, your spontaneity, your feelings. Religion lies to you, people, and cunning science lies to you. The reign of heaven makes a fool of you; the priests deceive you; they trick you with a future order, a future socialism. The scientists and professors deceive you. Don’t believe them. They hypnotize you and fleece you. They captivate you with the tawdry brilliance of their intellect.

People, your happiness is not in heaven but here on earth, not in the future but in the present. It lies in your own hands. Create Anarchy—completely,

leaving us only with these incandescent fragments that mark a particular moment in time. At their peak of performance, the documents of the Gordin brothers have a style and zing to them—a hysterical, telegraphic quality—that is almost non-existent in contemporary dreck anarchist literature (which seems powerless to keep up with life's leaps and bounds and manages to turn inspiration into ice) and we thought putting out a “sampler package” might instigate some much-needed *Meshugaas* in our lackluster fantasy-world of a “movement”!

Currently, we're attempting to acquire a complete set of Abba Gordin's individualist journal *The Clarion* with an eye towards assembling a comprehensive collection of his post-escape (from Soviet Russia) writings. But for now, as a prelude to this much larger project, we present these four vivid, fragmentary exhortations to a whole way of thinking about Anarchy...

of the rising communist state; Morris Schulmeister (an anarchist who had the distinction of taking part in armed expropriations against tsarists and communists alike) recalls liberating several million rubles from a safe belonging to a state bank and insurance company and giving some of the money to Abba Gordin to be used for his newspaper, *Anarkhiia*. By way of furthering mutual aid within the Federation, detachments of “Black Guards” continued to carry out expropriations — building occupations in the main — well into the spring of 1918. In April, 1918, these activities would serve as the excuse for Lenin's Communist government to conduct a series of police raids against the Federation. The official goal was to arrest and charge “robber bands” in the anarchist ranks — an assertion of the power of the Communist state over anarchist direct action — but the authorities quickly expanded the scope of illegality, announcing that “entire counter-revolutionary groups” had joined the Federation with the aim of “some covert action against Soviet [government] power”.

Following this logic, smashing the organizational structure of the state's most determined opponents “just happened” to go hand-in-hand with law enforcement. Certainly it underlined the stark contrast between the anarchist exercise of social power and state power in its Marxist guise. After the crackdown in Moscow and similar raids in St. Petersburg, the legality of anarchist activity was subject to the whims of the communist apparatchik and the Cheka (the first soviet state security organization). Criminalization effectively brought an end to anarchism as an above-ground movement within territories controlled by the Communist Party.

The deepening of the Civil War in Russia left the anarchists divided over whether to aid the Bolsheviks in their struggle with the Whites. Within the anarchist camp a variety of opinions emerged, ranging from resistance to collaboration; in the end, however, a naïve majority gave the Bolsheviks their support, and some even became members of the Communist party! Their intransigent comrades, by contrast, denounced them as “Soviet anarchists” who had succumbed to the hallucinatory allure of power politics.

One of the first pro-Bolshevik organizations of anarchists in Moscow, the Universalists, was formed in 1920 by (astonishingly!) the Gordin brothers, together with German Askarov, who was a member of the Soviet Central Executive Committee. They urged all anarchists to assist the Red Army in every way possible and to repudiate terrorism and other actions hostile to the government. A temporary dictatorship, the Universalists now inconsistently maintained, was a necessary stage in the transition to stateless communism.

It's difficult to understand how the Gordins were able to make the leap from their rabidly anti-Marxist theory of Pan-Anarchism to Anarcho-Universalism, a doctrine which endorsed the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Perhaps they were seduced by the mystique of Bolshevik power (which they had formerly viewed as a cathedral of shit) or perhaps they had come to regard the Bolsheviks -- whose emphasis on *revolutionary will* seemed to imply a rejection of economic determinism -- as apostates from the Marxist creed. In this time of social ferment, ideas were on the move like their perpetrators and political confusion was sure to infect the minds of many—but *individualist* anarchists like the Gordins? Was the vodka flowing a little too freely from the recently liberated distilleries? In any case, by 1920 the White armies were retreating on all fronts, and the Universalists and their fellow “Soviet anarchists,” having supported the winning side, were soon to reap their predictable “rewards”.

Ever vigilant, “the dictatorship of the proletariat” was established to combat the “inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of the mass” towards anarchism during the initial revolutionary upheaval and to create a controlled socialist society in its aftermath. The “practical work of building new forms of economy” required a state, Lenin reasoned, because whenever and wherever “petty-bourgeois anarchy” reared its head, “iron rule government that is revolutionarily bold, swift, and ruthless” had to repress it. And repress it, it did.

In the course of the communists great pogrom anarchist prisoners in the jails of Moscow, Petrograd, and other cities were sent to concentration camps near Archangel in the frozen north or to “political isolators” scattered throughout the country. During the mid-1920’s, the anarchists were removed from Solovetskii and dispersed among the Cheka prisons in the Ural Mountains or banished to penal colonies in Siberia (most of them never to be seen again).

Abba Gordins Later Years

In 1924, Abba Gordin was (miraculously) permitted to immigrate to the United States. His brother, V. L. Gordin, was not so lucky; though an actual convert to Bolshevism at this point, he was seized in 1925 and locked up in a Soviet psychiatric ward. Having settled in New York City, Abba Gordin continued to produce a dizzying torrent of rapid-paced books, essays, and poems, in several languages. He became a co-editor of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, the most long-lived anarchist periodical in the Yiddish language (1890-1977), and published his own monthly individualist journal, *The Clarion* (1932-1934), devoted to wordy attacks on the evils of contemporary society, as well as another English-language quarterly called *Problems* (1948-1950). After the vicious wreckage of his disastrous attempt to find common ground with the Bolsheviks, Abba Gordin cranked up his *tamizdat* efforts and his writings for *The Clarion*, in particular, represented both a return to “first principles” and a major leap forward.

Never at a loss for words, Gordin also published a literary philosophical review, *Yiddishe Shriften* (1936-1957), in addition to being a habitual contributor to Russian- and English-language newspapers, and in Yiddish to: *Idishe kemfer* (Jewish fighter), *Tsukunft* (Forward), *Feder* (Pen), and *Oyfsnay* (Afresh)—all in New York; and in Hebrew to: *Hadoar* (The mail), *Mabua* (Fount), *Megilot* (Scrolls), *Had hakevutsa* (Echo of the collective), and *Sefer hashana* (Yearbook).

Virtually a one-man propaganda machine, Gordin also composed the following books, in Yiddish: *Di sotsyale frage* (The social question) (New York, 1940), 197 pp.; *Sotsyale abergloyberay* (Social superstition) (New York, 1941), 304 pp.; *Di soydes fun der gezelschaft* (Secrets of society) (New York, 1941), 320 pp.; *Undzer banem* (Our conception) (New York, 1946); *Zikhroynes un kheshboynes* (Reminiscences and reflections) (Buenos Aires, 1955), 460 pp; and *In gerangl far frayhayt* (In the struggle for freedom), *two volumes* (Buenos Aires, 1956)

And this select bibliography doesn’t even include all the pseudonyms Gordin wrote under!

In 1958, Abba Gordin moved to Israel, and in Tel Aviv, founded a Yiddish anarchist circle, “Agudath Schochrei Chofesh” (ASHUACH), with a library of classic anarchist works in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish, and with a large hall for meetings and conferences. He also began to publish a bilingual monthly review (in Yiddish and Hebrew), *Problemen/Problemot*, which he directed from 1959 to 1964. During this period, ASHUACH had approximately 150 members and drew hundreds of people to conferences on the philosophy of anarchism. Among the more debated topics were: the spiritual roots of anarchism and the connections between anarchism, the Book of the Prophets (Neviim), and the Kabbalah. *Problemen* published stories and articles on the history of anarchism, Hasidic legends, medieval Jewish literature and the current problems of Yiddish literature.

After the death of Abba Gordin, from 1964 to 1971 the review was directed by Shmuel Abarbanel and Joseph Luden. ASHUACH came to a halt in the 1980s. The old anarchists died one after the other and none of the young ones knew Yiddish. The final issue of *Problemen* was published in December 1989 (it was the one-hundred-and-sixty-fifth issue). This was the last Yiddish anarchist periodical publication in the world.

We Have Set This Affair on Nothing but Fragments

Unfortunately, the great flowering of pamphlets and mock-serious manifestos let loose by the Gordin brothers during their heyday were “disappeared” along with so many of the Russian anarchists themselves,